

Principal Developments in World Communist Affairs

(21 May to 19 June 1968)

1. Czechoslovakiaa. Soviet/Czech Mutual Interest vs. Mutual Irritation

For the most part, observers of the Czechoslovak scene have noted that the past month has witnessed a disposition of propagandists of the Soviet Union and East Germany on the one hand and the news commentators and writers in Czechoslovakia on the other to emphasize their mutuality of interests and minimize the frictions between Czechoslovakia and the rest of the Soviet Bloc. This is even more true on the part of the political leaders of each side, as the many professions of mutual understanding and confidence testify. Apart from the fitful flare-ups of polemics on either side, the most serious discordant note was Pravda commentator Konstantinov's passing mention of a key member of the Dubcek regime, Cestmir Cisar, as an example of modern revisionism for Cisar's alleged disparagement of Leninism as a universal doctrine. The attack was a unique example of Soviet media directly attacking a current Czech leader by name and was, moreover, gratuitous in that Konstantinov seems to have distorted Cisar's words and intent in the process. It remains to be seen whether this is, as some Czech journalists speculate, a renewal of the polemical battle with even more ominous purposes than heretofore.

b. Czech Press Freedom

In a month of seeming reconciliation between the nervous Russians and East Germans with the centrist Dubcek leadership, the main bone of contentions remained the uncensored press and other information media in Czechoslovakia. With amazing indiscretion it still raised issues that might throw in doubt, in the minds of many Soviets and East Germans the Dubcek regime's ability to control subversive tendencies in Czechoslovakia (i.e., threats to Czechoslovak Communist Party [CzCP] dominance and control). Cisar in fact cautioned the press to exercise self-restraint in reporting and commentary on sensitive matters, while later reiterating that censorship would not be reimposed. This latter promise may have been inspired by the recollection that press criticism was a major factor in the deposition of conservative leader Novotny and a realization that until the battle against the conservatives is decisively won the Dubcek leadership depends on the support of the liberal-minded news media.

c. Victory over Conservatives

The conservative Communists are led by former President Novotny and comprise some 40 members of the 110-member CzCP Central Committee. The Central Committee Plenum (29 May to 1 June) was a major test of strength between Dubcek and the conservatives. Among the issues were the future status of Novotny and the early convening of a Party Congress (favored by the liberals and opposed by the conservatives). The Plenum decided

to deprive Novotny of his seat on the Central Committee, and, in addition, to suspend his Party membership along with those of six other prominent Communists, all apparently conservatives. A further victory over the conservatives was the approval for convening a Congress in September, at which a continuation of the attack on the conservatives is expected. Some observers believed that the Soviets, if not intent on preserving intact the conservative voice in the CzCP, would at least consider a conservative setback at the Plenum as an additional sign of the unreliability of the Dubcek regime. Thus far, however, there has been no unequivocal expression of Soviet disapproval of the purge of Novotny and the other conservatives, which Soviet media reported promptly, briefly, and without comment. It may be that the Soviets decided that the situation called for maximum discretion.

d. Discouragement of Independent Political Parties

A major potential threat to the Dubcek regime was the mushrooming of political and quasi-political movements which, in the wave of hope and optimism engendered by the accession to power of Dubcek and the promulgation of his liberalizing Action Program, strove for recognition as political entities independent of the CzCP and of the rubber stamp parties controlled by it in the National Front. During the past month the regime served formal notice (apparently docilely accepted) that these incipient independent organizations were impermissible on the Czechoslovak scene. On 16 May, Rude Pravo, the official organ of the CzCP, warned that such movements -- in the form of clubs or other similar organizations -- could not be legally formed or become active without prior approval by the Interior Ministry. Shortly thereafter one such group (the Club of Engaged Non-Party Members) cancelled its meeting and another group was prevented from carrying out a previously planned meeting. It does not seem likely that such independent political organizations will gain approval from the Dubcek regime in the future. Even more recent (mid-June) discussions of the National Front and the condemnation of proponents of independent parties, such as Ivan Svitak, tend to confirm this view.

e. The Military Maneuvers

Though Soviet and Czech leaders have gone to great lengths to assure the Czech public and the world at large that the military maneuvers on Czech territory are a normal, planned, routine, innocuous exercise, there can be little doubt that, intended or not, it is a form of insurance that any effort to overthrow the CzCP will not succeed. At the same time, these maneuvers, coupled with the sporadic Soviet attacks on Czech publicists, are a measure of the continuing concern, objectively warranted or not, of the Soviet regime. And despite the leveling off of nervous reactions, Soviet unqualified acceptance of the Czech Action Program of liberalization and democratization is still in suspense.

2. Extension of the Revolutionary Committee System in Communist China

The revolutionary committees are a device for administering provinces since Mao's Red Guard and the Cultural Revolution destroyed the normal processes for governing. They are composed of representatives of three elements: the army, the Communist Party, and the Red Guard.

The establishment of a revolutionary committee in Szechwan Province -- consisting of 70 million inhabitants and occupying a very important strategic area -- was hailed in a Peking New China News Agency broadcast on 1 June 1968 as "a great victory for Chairman Mao's ... great proletarian cultural revolution" and as signaling "the complete bankruptcy of the criminal scheme of China's Khrushchev [President Liu Shao-chi], the others in the handful of top capitalist-roaders in the Party, and their agents to restore capitalism in Southwest China and Szechwan Province."

Szechwan is bigger than France in size and almost equal to East and West Germany in population and is one of China's richest and most populous provinces. Bitter struggles have taken place in this region between anti-and pro-Mao elements for the past two years. Even artillery and anti-aircraft guns were reportedly used throughout last year during the renewed outbreak of factional fighting. Since squabbling continued for over a year even among members of a military team appointed by Peking to form the revolutionary committee, some observers find it hard to consider the establishment of Szechwan revolutionary committee as a "victory." This new committee is the supreme body responsible for handling the affairs of the region, which were previously handled by the Communist Party Committee and local administrative offices.

Only five of Communist China's 26 provinces and autonomous regions are still without such committees. They are Fukien, Yunan, Tibet, Sinkiang and Kwangsi. Failure thus to establish revolutionary committees in these provinces is reportedly considered pardonable because they are on a "war footing." They border Russia, India, Burma, Laos, and North Vietnam or face Formosa. Szechwan was the last province in "peaceful" China to create a revolutionary committee.

3. Chinese Communist Support of Insurgent Movements in Northeast India

Despite preoccupation with vast internal problems, Red China finds time and energy to export revolution. In early June 1968, India reportedly sealed its Nagaland border with Burma to prevent Naga rebel "nationalists" -- armed, guerrilla-trained, guided and encouraged by Red China -- from returning to resume their fight for the "national independence" of Nagaland and thus break the uneasy cease-fire so tortuously negotiated in September 1963 that halted their eight-year war with India. (The cease-fire is due to expire July 1st unless re-extended.) This preventive action was taken by the Indian government as a result of bloody Indo-Burmese border clashes in May which resulted in the death of some Indian troops and about 200 Naga rebels trying to return from China, the

capture of 24 rebels, and the seizure of large quantities of Chinese arms, ammunition and documents which, officials said, gave conclusive evidence of Naga links with China.

The seriousness of Red Chinese subversive influence and designs on Nagaland cannot be taken lightly. A Hindustan Times correspondent who visited Nagaland in April (this area has been barred to foreign correspondents for the past 8 years) and talked with the leaders and people was privately told by a "political thinker" in the rebels' underground "parallel" government that the "political initiative and military direction of a Cuban type revolution in the offing in Nagaland have passed to Peking ... that the solution of the Naga problem is no longer in our hands." Coordination between China and the Naga rebels has greatly improved since the first group of Naga rebels marched to China, via Burma, in January 1967 to enlist active Red Chinese support for their fight for "national independence" and were told that "training a guerrilla force was not enough," that the underground Naga political leadership must establish direct contact with Peking and must send its "political representative" there. This was evident when the second group of Naga rebels that left for China in January 1968 found truck convoys waiting for them in northern Burma. Over 1,000 Nagas are now reported to be in China -- receiving guerrilla training, arms and indoctrination -- and are not expected to return until the last quarter of 1968.

(Nagaland consists of 6300 square miles of dense forest and steep hills, populated by 400,000 nature-worshipping animists, about three-fifths of whom are today converted Christian Baptists and only about one-fifth of whom can read and write. There 16 Naga tribes which set aside their ancient feuds and formed a council seeking a more independent status. They live in 800 Naga villages under a dual government -- the official, elected regime, and the underground nationalist one.)

Indian security forces, concerned as well about the growing evidence of Red Chinese training and equipping of rebels from the Mizo Hills and Manipur -- in northeastern India's remote hill country which adjoins Nagaland, borders Burma and lies close to East Pakistan -- have also intensified their security patrols in these border areas to prevent further Chinese subversion there as well as to prevent further raiding and plundering of the Union territory of Tripura by these rebels.

In late April 1968, the Government claimed a sudden outburst of hostility in the Mizo Hills involved heavy casualties on both sides and it confirmed officially that some of the weapons used by those indulging in subversive activities in the Mizo Hills, Nagaland and Manipur are of Chinese origin. About the same time, another report claimed that groups of Mizo rebels, trained and equipped by the Chinese, entered the Mizo Hills from the Chittagong Hill tracts in East Pakistan and that Red China had shipped weapons to Chittagong camps in East Pakistan to arm and train Mizo rebels. Still another late April Indian Government report warned

that India may have to resort to military operations to deal with increasing instability in the remote hill areas of northeast India -- in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland -- and added that "Mizos have also gone to China and continue to conduct guerrilla operations" from there.

(The 300,000 members of the Mizo tribes, 90% of whom profess to be Christian and nearly half of whom are literate, live in the Mizo Hills -- in the southern finger of Assam state on India's northeast border with Burma. Only about one-third of the Mizos are reportedly securely under government control. Since 28 February 1966, the 7,000 square miles of the Mizo Hills have been aflame with rebellion.)

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Ho Chi Minh's Domestic Problems and the Vietnam War

No war can be fought without problems, and the problems engendered by war are never peculiar to one side. The world press has concentrated so heavily on those with which the Allies must contend, however, that it has been difficult to bring Hanoi's difficulties into the limelight. Like anyone else, Ho Chi Minh has his troubles, both military and political, and they are grave. Indications of those problems are not as readily apparent to the free world as those of the Allies are to the Communist world, but Hanoi's troubles are gradually being catalogued -- in captured documents, in casualty lists, in the growing importance of defectors and number of prisoners of war, in cullings from her press and radio. The following are only a few of Hanoi's problems, but knowledge of a portion of them makes it possible to deduce others now and is assurance that other problems will gradually bob to the surface.

War weariness must be deduced for the most part, but it must inevitably be part of the dreary life in North Vietnam -- for her people, her leaders and possibly even her military establishment. Movies and eyewitness accounts attest to the discomfort of life under regular air attack, but life is undoubtedly uncomfortable also as a result of food and consumer goods shortages. Resentment must be growing when those who can afford to patronize the black market manage to feed and clothe themselves with relative ease, and resentment -- even active disobedience to party authority -- has actually been reflected in Hanoi's recent anti-subversion law (see attachments). Water supply problems chronically plague North Vietnam (Hanoi's propagandists, ignoring the fact that damage to reservoirs, and other facilities is an annual phenomenon during the rainy season, blame it on deliberate U.S. air attacks against water installations). Housing shortages are also a problem as are the absence of hygiene, the scarcity of medicine and medical aid, the separation of families, the loss of Vietnam's young men -- all the ugly accompaniments of life for a people whose country is waging war. It would be interesting to learn what those who have and are undergoing these privations feel about Ho Chi Minh's avowed intent to extend the war for 10, 15 or 20 years if necessary.

The dismal state of North Vietnamese agriculture is a major problem for the country. For several rice harvests years have fallen seriously below the four and one-half million ton averages of the early 1960's partly as a result of bad weather, partly from mismanagement, partly from the necessity to shift men and materiel from agriculture into more direct support of the war effort. The diet of the general population has been maintained at a bare minimum and even this has been accomplished only by imports of rice, wheat, flour and other foodstuffs from Communist China and the Soviet Bloc; imports have been massive they will unquestionably be higher yet in 1968.

A third problem directly related to both of the above is the difficult and increasingly dangerous task of infiltrating more troops and supplies from North Vietnam into the South -- North Vietnam could, in fact, be viewed as a combination funnel and arsenal, which is permitted

to consume only the minimum essentials while processing and transporting to the South whatever is needed for the conduct of operations there. The North Vietnamese people have apparently accepted this role -- as they do living with a war -- without enthusiasm or much resistance. Although U.S. bombing is today limited almost entirely to interdiction of the infiltration routes in the panhandle, the massive repairs to be made further north and the task of maintaining and repairing the full lines of communication require more than 200,000 full-time workers and several hundred thousand more part-time workers.

Manpower requirements, as represented only in small part by the 200,000 workers needed for the infiltration routes, are a burgeoning problem for North Vietnam. Workers are needed with ever increasing urgency in transportation, agriculture, communications, engineering and labor battalions, industry, domestic defense and in North Vietnam's Armed forces (see attachments for details). One of the means Hanoi is using to alleviate her manpower requirements has recently been revealed in the assignment to North Vietnam of 40-50,000 Chinese in engineering, labor and railway battalions. This partial "solution" to the manpower problem may well create an even more serious problem. The Chinese comprise a difficult-to-assimilate part of the population and a potential menace for the future (as they were in North Vietnam after World War II or in North Korea after the fighting ended there in 1953). Many thousands of Chinese technicians and laborers arrived during the past three years at Hanoi's request to keep supplies moving, to build war-related facilities and to help cope with the bomb damage; their political activities in giving the North Vietnamese people daily lessons in the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung were their own idea.

North Vietnamese geographic and economic dependence on China and the Bloc is a virtually insoluble problem. North Vietnam's dependence upon the Soviet Union and the Bloc for vast quantities of military supplies and Peking's rift with Moscow further complicate Hanoi's efforts to steer a careful course between the two Communist giants while attempting to extract the maximum concessions from each with the minimum of repayment or other commitments. The emphasis, in fact, has been on grant aid rather than credits, since it is unrealistic to expect a poor country, and one whose exports and foreign currency holdings are near the zero mark, to repay the vast debts Hanoi is incurring in this war.

Peking's negative attitude regarding peace negotiations undoubtedly exacerbates any friction which exists in the Lao Dong Politburo between the pro-Peking and pro-Moscow factions as well as between the Politburo's hawks and doves. It is difficult to see how a country or people whose armed forces are sustaining such heavy casualties could continue to view warmly Peking's oft-repeated "suggestions" that the North Vietnamese foreswear peace talks and confine themselves to military action, concentrate on battlefield victories and absorb the inevitable military losses.



North Vietnamese casualties (as well as those of the Viet Cong) have been frightful. Since January 1961, the number of enemy dead has been over 360,000. Forty thousand of these deaths are estimated to have occurred during the Tet offensive. (However, there are close to 350,000 men in the armed forces still in North Vietnam and Hanoi's militia and security forces are at least that size. Out of a population of 18 million, North Vietnam has nearly three million males between the ages of 17 and 35; and additional 200,000 males reach the age of 17 each year, more than half of whom are fit for military service.)

Declining troop morale in the North Vietnamese Army is illustrated by the increasing number of high-level defectors from the NVA as well as a greater number of unit surrenders. The comments of these men in press conferences, interviews, prisoner interrogations, etc., have vividly revealed that life in the NVA is sometimes hungry, frequently depressing and always hazardous (see comments of Lt. Colonel Dung and others, attached).

The above points do not cover all of Hanoi's problems; others are referred to in the attached articles. While this evidence should not be misinterpreted as meaning that North Vietnam will collapse in the near future, it does effectively illustrate the terrible price Hanoi is paying in continuing the war ... a price that she has been at pains to conceal.

July 1968

Assessment of North Vietnam Media:  
Indications of Increasing Morale Problems in North Vietnam  
(as of December 1966)

An article in the Hanoi Army newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dan of 1 November revealed the North Vietnamese regime's fears about army morale. Written by one Trung Cong, the article amounted to a warning to the Party to step up ideological education before "rightist," i.e. defeatist, thoughts irremediably affected the army's fighting spirit.

In its theme of the conflict between "proletarian" and "non-proletarian" thoughts, the article defined the latter as "rightist, negative and individualistic thoughts when faced with new ordeals." These were said to take shape and develop if the "ideological task is not carried out constantly." There were army units which had to struggle against these negative thoughts because "the battleground of proletarian ideology in these units is steadily consolidated every day." Faced with hardship and "temporary, partial losses," a number of soldiers were failing to entertain "correct views and thoughts." Only a "thorough education" could bring soldiers' thoughts into line with the Party's views, and a careful check should be kept on "the trend of the development of thought."

The article implied that the ideological leadership had failed in its "central task" of "ensuring that everyone has a steadfast anti-U.S. national salvation determination." It criticized the leadership for lacking "an objective and scientific method of study as well as a firm mass outlook." This had resulted in a failure to understand "the mind of the masses."

Although it was hinted that "passive phenomena," (i.e. a war weariness) had arisen after fierce battles, the article claimed that "suffering losses and making sacrifices do not mean that we are not winning". If this thought was borne in mind, Trung Cong concluded, "we will always be optimistic, confident and resolute."

Problems of morale are on the increase generally in North Vietnam. It is clear that there is a strong body of opinion critical of the Hanoi regime's aggressive policy which has exposed the North to US-South Vietnamese bombing raids. The people who hold these views are certainly in the leadership, as well as in the army and among the civilian population.

Evidence that they are in the leadership, possibly at a high level, is to be found in an article by Hoang Quoc Viet in the July issue of the party periodical, Hoc Tap.

Viet, one of the most influential members of the Communist (Lao Dong) party leadership, who is believed to favor China's hard line, was much concerned about the "new workers" who were becoming "very easily perplexed when faced with difficulties and hardships." He considered that it had become an "extremely urgent problem" to struggle resolutely against."

"pacifist ideas." It had to be admitted, the article said, that "a number of our comrades have lacked a correct view of the working class in consolidating and safeguarding the north and liberating the south. As a result, certain front policies have not been strictly carried out."

As these "comrades" were in a position to prevent the implementation of front policies, it can be assumed that they hold important Party or Government posts.

On 8 October Hanoi Radio also admitted that in the present situation "many of our people are worried" and it was likely that "their worries might affect their struggle spirit." Some people, the broadcast said, had thought that "we should be a little bit more yielding and flexible in order to avoid bloodshed and killing. They believe that the use of diplomatic skill may sometimes spare sacrifices." However, "For our part we think otherwise ... we are deeply aware that independence and freedom cannot be achieved through negotiations and talks but only through the shedding of our blood."

The problems resulting from loss of morale have led to a general tightening up of security and consequently to increased emphasis on the role of the security forces. President Ho Chi Minh spoke to the North Vietnamese People's Security Forces Emulation Conference (broadcast on 22 October) urging security officers and men to "perfect their organization" and "strive to improve revolutionary morality." They should be "sincerely united, must completely eliminate individualism, must thoroughly correct arrogant bureaucratic and overbearing manners, and must establish very good relations between the security forces and the people." One of their principal tasks was to "deepen their hatred for the U.S. aggressors."

The Party daily Nhan Dan, in an editorial on 22 October, stressed that the security forces had been ordered to "check in time and suppress all pilots of the reactionaries in order satisfactorily to protect our leading organs and armed forces..."

An editorial on 27 November in Quan Doi Nhan Dan emphasized the need to review regularly the rules governing "the preservation of secrets and the prevention of enemy penetration in the units of the people's armed forces, in the public authorities, schools and co-operatives" and to supplement them when necessary. Security methods should be integrated "into the firm pattern of our daily life." It was essential to "react skilfully to all events as they occur, not letting them affect other localities." "Backward elements" must be reformed; "reactionary elements" should be suppressed.

Combined with these warnings and exhortations to vigilance are attacks on American "deceitful propaganda." The editorial warned that the United States used "material means to buy up certain elements along with spreading false rumors and putting forward hypocritical sugar-coated arguments which had "the dark aim of paralyzing our army's and people's vigilance

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NEWS WEEKLY Special on Vietnam  
(Independent Melbourne weekly journal)

July 1968

# CAN THE WAR BE WON?

## CHAPTER IX

IT IS SIMPLY not true, as we are told so often, that this is an "unwinnable war", a "bottomless pit".

At the present time it is widely thought that the United States and its allies have gained a military superiority in Viet Nam and that, as long as the United States remains firmly committed, the Vietcong cannot achieve a military victory. In fact, if it wanted to, the United States could practically wipe North Viet Nam off the map in a matter of hours. It should be commended for the restraint it has shown.

It seems that the old theory that it required a manpower ratio of at least 10 or 12 to 1 to successfully counter guerrilla warfare has been largely rendered obsolete in Viet Nam by the introduction of new techniques by the United States, the most important of them being the slow-moving troop carrier, the parachute, chemical defoliators, and particularly the helicopter which has given the counter-guerrilla forces a previously unknown degree of mobility.

### Military victory

As was pointed out in the chapter on Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare, the first essential in counter-guerrilla operations is to defeat the guerrilla militarily. This we have begun to do. There are a number of reasons for this but by far the most important is that we have gained a limited superiority in terms of mobility through the helicopter. In other words we have largely taken from the guerrilla two of his principal assets — Space and Time. From what was said earlier, it can be seen that this contributes greatly to the breaking down of the super-structure of the Vietcong apparatus.

Other important factors contributing to the same end are, firstly the immense air power of the United States, particularly evident in its B52 bombing raids, which are destroying the Vietcong's underground network, and completely demoralising many of the North Vietnamese conscript guerrillas entering the South and secondly, the fact that North Vietnamese guerrillas are now actually controlling the Vietcong's day-to-day operations in the field. The problem for the Vietcong with the latter is that the North Vietnamese consider the war to be in a different and more advanced phase than do the South Vietnamese who have a far better understanding of the country and the present situation. Vietcong into fighting large scale

battles and they are being duly massacred. The North Vietnamese interpretation may have been right twelve months ago — it seems to be completely wrong at the present time. There appears to be little doubt that they should still be conducting small-scale, guerrilla operations (phases one and two of Mao's strategy) rather than engaging in large-scale battles (somewhere between phases two and three).

### Balance has swung

It is possible, one must suppose, that the guerrillas could return to the earlier phases of conflict. But even if they did it must be doubtful whether this would be of any great advantage as the upper hand in terms of that critical factor of mobility within the confines of South Viet Nam would remain with the United States forces. It must be emphasised that the military balance, even in such refined aspects, has altered considerably over the last twelve months or so.

Having said that, North Viet Nam now appears to face four alternatives, excluding, of course, withdrawal. It may call in a major power such as Russia or China; it may move for negotiations and attempt to gain at the conference table what it is losing in the field (with reasonable chances of succeeding); it may broaden the war Westwards across Laos and Cambodia into Thailand, where the necessary spadework has already been done; or it may do none of these things but continue on as at present pinning its hopes to outlasting the United States or to a favourable turn in the South Vietnamese political situation.

### Shirking showdown

The first seems highly unlikely as neither Russia nor China would look with favour upon the prospect of coming into direct conflict with the United States. The second also appears unlikely at the moment. Hanoi let a golden opportunity to negotiate from a reasonably sound bargaining position pass it by last January during the U.S. "peace offensive". Decisions of this kind depend very largely on the balance of power in the Lao Dong Politburo and so prediction is difficult. The third course of action seems to be a real alternative has the advantage of being tha

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one presently employed. **Approved For Release 2005/08/17 : CIA-RDP78-03061A000400030030-3**

decided disadvantage of not leading to victory, at least militarily. Again, any decision to deviate from the present course of action may depend on the power structure within the Lao Dong.

The most plausible alternative course of action to that presently being pursued appears, therefore, to be a widening of the area of conflict. It is reasonable to expect that the guerrillas, may attempt to retrieve undisputed superiority in terms of Space and Time by extending the war into Thailand, if this is at all possible and that largely depends on their resources and morale. Should North Viet Nam win in the South it will, of course, not have any great problems in either of these respects.

### Breaking morale

The most effective way of counter-acting this possibility is to do all in our power to undermine the guerrillas' morale, will and resources in the broadest sense of the term. For this more intensive bombing of North Viet Nam may or may not be necessary. What is necessary is effective positive action and preparatory counter-guerrilla operations in Thailand in order to reduce the susceptibility of the peasants to guerrilla exploitation and that South Viet Nam, the United States, Thailand and their allies stand firm and unyielding and clearly show themselves as such.

This conflict will be decided by the battle of willpower as much as anything else. The military conflict in the field is only one part, although a major part, of the whole war. The other aspect, which could be the deciding factor, irrespective of the military situation is the political battle, being fought on two levels. Firstly, in Saigon and other important South Vietnamese urban areas where the Vietcong and its agents aim at arousing the maximum amount of discontent, chaos and disorder, through the exploitation of grievances, real or otherwise, in hope of a Government at least neutralist in outlook coming to power which would tell the United States and its allies to leave and allow the Vietnamese to settle their own problems "in peace" by coming to some form of accommodation with the Vietcong. Secondly, it is being fought in a num-

ber of countries, particularly those which are opening committed in any way to the support of South Viet Nam, such as Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Britain and Korea. In this field, the battle is being carried on by world Communist organisations through the manipulation of the press, radio, clergy, peace fronts, trade unions, political parties, intellectuals and bodies such as "Viet Nam Day Committees", "Save Our Sons" organisations with the ultimate objective of bringing sufficient world-wide pressure on the United States Government to undermine its will to continue and to persuade it to leave Viet Nam and the Indo-Chinese region or at least reduce its commitment there.

Whilst at the present time, the Communists appear generally to be also losing this aspect of the battle, no one can be certain of its eventual outcome as the military conflict is likely to continue in one form or another for some years, during which currently unforeseen circumstances might suddenly affect the political battle both in Viet Nam and abroad, consequently deciding the final outcome of the whole war.

### War can be won

Overall, there is little doubt that the war can be won. Whether it is won will depend very largely on the degree of understanding shown by the United States and its allies of the internal Vietnamese political and social situation and upon the firmness of their resolution to prevent further Communist expansion in Indo-China, with the realisation that the fall of South Viet Nam would in all probability be a prelude to the fall of South-East Asia, if not all Asia; to the destruction of the freedom and welfare of the peoples of these countries and their slow, but steady, progress towards democracy; to a major change in the world balance of power; and to the isolation and probably the eventual capitulation of Australia.

If it is won, a major step will have been taken towards the preservation of world peace. The people of South Viet Nam will be able to return to a more normal mode of living and to the task of economically developing their country which in the mid-fifties proved itself capable of achieving one of the fastest rates of growth in Asia.

WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

18 June 1968

## War's Biggest Surrender: Half N. Viets

SAIGON, June 18 (UPI) — A company of communist troops laid down their arms and held up their hands in Saigon today in the largest mass surrender of the Vietnam War.

U. S. and South Vietnamese military spokesmen said about half the 121 guerrillas who surrendered were North Vietnamese, usually the toughest of the communist troops.

They gave up three miles northeast of downtown Saigon after being hunted in house-to-house fighting by South Vietnamese Marines who had killed at least 60 of their comrades the past two days.

"This is quite encouraging. We're happy to see them turn themselves in this way rather than at the cost of a number of our men," said Capt. Charles Bentley, 28, of Richmond, Va., a U. S. adviser to the Marines.

Allied officials said the previous record surrender was 108 North Vietnamese who gave up to U. S. Army paratroopers three months ago near the city of Hue, 360 miles north.

JAPAN TIMES  
14 May 1968

## Views From Europe Peking Pressure in Peace Talks

By MAMORU KIKUCHI  
Japan Times Correspondent

PARIS—There is the black shadow of Red China hanging over the "official conversations" between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Paris. diplomatic assault course with

many obstacles, among which Peking's influence over Hanoi seems to be the most difficult one.

With hundreds of pressmen coming to Paris for the

talks, the only Chinese Communist pressman, the correspondent of the New China News Agency, left for "a vacation" in Peking. The Chinese Embassy's press attache also left for home.

On the other hand, Chinese Ambassador Huang Chen, who has been home for "reeducation" by the Red Guards, is expected to come back to Paris. He will no doubt try to bring strong pressure to bear on the Hanoi delegation.

and undermining our will to fight. Ho Chi Minh, in his speech to the People's Security Forces' Emulation Conference, warned against an intensification of intelligence and espionage activities by the enemy, who was said to be attempting to "encourage and entice the reactionary elements in the North to his side in order to oppose and sabotage the revolution."

By thus laying the blame for the opposition to the regime on the shoulders of the United States, it is clearly hoped to direct the widespread disaffection into anti-American channels and away from the Party and Government.

Observers believe that the Chinese are opposed to any compromise solution. They believe that the Russians support settlement of the Vietnam problem through some compromise because they want a detente and are now too busy in Eastern Europe.

Some observers believe that there might be some opportunity for Washington to reach agreement with Hanoi despite Chinese opposition. However, French sources said that the chances seem slim that North Vietnam will climb down from the Moscow-Peking tightrope through which it has hitherto managed to preserve its independence. This is because, if they reached an agreement,

it would mean that Hanoi had chosen Washington and Moscow rather than Peking.

On the other hand, if Hanoi gives way to pressure from Peking, it would lose its present independence. In this situation, the Chinese are expected to take every opportunity of complicating the Paris talks.

Apart from the Chinese pressure and Hanoi's difficult position, the negotiating timetable is likely to be linked with the American presidential election schedule. This would obviously suit the purposes of President Lyndon B. Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. At the same time, Hanoi would use the American convention deadline as a lever to extract concessions from Washington.

JERUSALEM POST

1 March 1968

## Vietnam: The story of one Hanoi soldier who surrendered

By MARK FRANKLAND

SAIGON (Ofns). —

THE Vietnam war has reached a stage where statistics have taken the reality out of suffering. In the past few weeks, thousands of men have been killed, tens of thousands wounded. There are hundreds of thousands of refugees. As the figures rattle off the typewriter you may just have time to register surprise at the quantity of the suffering, but its quality has little chance to penetrate.

Let us, therefore, praise Dinh Cong Ba, a 24-year-old North Vietnamese soldier who one February morning crept out from his foxhole under the cover of smoke from the heavy battle round him, and found his way to a Vietnamese Catholic priest, to whom he surrendered. My purpose is not to praise him because he gave himself up, or chose the "right" side. It is just that his is the story of one living man, and through it we can pay our respects to all the other sad stories of this war that are hidden forever behind statistics.

Ba is an open, smiling young man. His face is still pale from his months of living in the jungle and his arms are covered with insect bites and scratches. Although he now dresses in the brown shirt and trousers of a *hoi chanh* (someone who has surrendered under the Saigon Government's Open Arms Programme) he still wears his Vietcong rubber tyre sandals. His toe-nails look like small, rough sea-shells.

Ba walked all the way South in a group that totalled five companies (750 men). His was called the "Finish the War"

Company. They entered Laos somewhere near Tchepone, and at the end of June crossed into South Vietnam in Kontum Province.

### Jungle tracks

All along the route, at a distance of a day's march apart, they came across liaison posts where they were fed and provided with a guide for the next day. These guides chose the jungle tracks that were free of American bombing and flareups. It is a tribute to their skill that in all the journey south the group was bombed only once, when entering South Vietnam, and one soldier was killed. Fifty others were sent back because of illness. Usually they travelled by day along paths completely covered by jungle, but open spaces were negotiated by night.

They carried on their backs food for three months: a kilo-and-a-half of dried meat, the same amount of salt and 400 grammes of monosodium glutamate, which they used to make soup with forest vegetables. They marched five or six hours a day for five days, rested the sixth.

In August they met up with the Vietcong units, whose strength they were to bolster. Ba joined the 92nd Artillery Company of the VC Fifth Division, armed with five DKZ 75 mm. recoilless anti-tank rifles and 18 AK 47s. His job, like most of the soldiers, was to carry ammunition.

Although it was a mixed Vietcong-Northern unit, all the leaders, from section chief up, were Southerners. Relations between the two groups, Ba said, were "very good." He admired the political

cadre very much — "he was our spiritual element". The cadre said "our mission was to attack the Americans, liberate the South and unify the country. We were told it would be enough to have one battle and morale was very high."

The company took up a position in Bien Hoa Province along the Dong Nai River, some 20 miles from Saigon, but after two months' waiting they had to move back towards the Cambodian border, "because American tactics had caused a shortage of rice." However, the company never seems to have been seriously hampered in its movements, which, say something about the limitations of American and South Vietnamese intelligence and air power.

Until January 1968, they occupied themselves in training and with transporting rice which had to be brought from the Cambodian side of the border. Some of the Northern troops were surprised to find the South more prosperous than they expected. The political cadre explained that some people in the South "were slaves of material things," and Ba said the men agreed with him.

### 'Lost courage'

In January the company moved back for the great battle. In fact it never went into action properly because the VC plan

in this case was caught off balance by an American reaction that was lucky rather than intentional. "It was the worst battlefield I've seen," said an American officer later. "You could have walked an L-shaped area covering three kilometres and scarcely have touched the ground. I've never seen so many bodies, not even after the human wave attacks in Korea." Who can blame Ba for that moment when he "lost courage?"

His future now is uncertain. He still admires Ho Chi Minh very much, and does not know if there is anyone like him in the South. He thinks the North could go on fighting for another six years or so. "It will be difficult to arouse the ardour of the troops now, but perhaps the political cadre will think of something."

He rather likes the Americans he has met but is not so sure about the South Vietnamese officials. What he would really like is to somehow attach himself to the American Army and go North with them so that he could rejoin his family. He thinks "the Americans would destroy the Communist Party but not the people." Ba is a nice, open fellow, but goodness knows what the war will end up doing with him. He broke out of the world of statistics for a moment when he left his foxhole, but he cannot escape its clutches for ever.

WASHINGTON POST  
10 June 1968

## VC Defector Offers Allies a Strategy

By Lee Lescaze

Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, June 9—Former Vietcong Lt. Col. Phan Viet Dung, a high-ranking defector, thinks the war will go on for a long time if the allies pursue a military victory.

"If we want to crush the other side militarily, it will take a long time and the cost will be high," Dung said.

"But there are other ways to end the war. We can exploit divisions on their side. We can perhaps find a way to get them to rally in groups, not singly as I did."

Dung, who had commanded a regiment, is certain that other Vietcong officers and soldiers share his doubt that the war will never be solved militarily and he believes that many also are not certain they want Vietnam to become part of the Communist bloc.

### Foe Seen Resigned

"Since 1965, everyone (in the Vietcong) has known that there can be no military solution to the war," Dung said, in a long interview.

Dung angered one military interrogator several days earlier by refusing to give detailed information about the Vietcong 165th Regiment, which he commanded before he defected.

He had said that many of the Vietcong are his friends and he is not eager to see them killed. He wants to aid the Saigon government but not by simply informing on his unit.

### 3 Phases Since 1963

The Colonel came back from several years in North Vietnam in 1963. He divides the years since then into three phases.

In the first, "when there were only American advisers, the war was fairly easy." He said, "I was in only one battle where the Vietcong had seri-

ous difficulty—they had to leave ten dead and one machine gun behind.

Dung fought most of the time in the Highlands along the Cambodian border. In the second phase, he said, his troops would usually have the advantage at the start of each battle because of surprise attacks and slow Allied reactions. But when the reaction and the planes came, Dung said, the advantage shifted.

The third phase began with the Tet attacks on the cities, he said. He found this fighting extremely difficult for his regiment.

### VC Leaders' Concern

"Vietcong leaders want to create an impact in the world and don't care about casualties," Dung said. "There is a conflict, a contradiction, between carrying out the task



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...by the higher echelons and guaranteeing victory, especially guaranteeing the lives of our soldiers for whom we are responsible.

"If we fulfilled our responsibility to our troops, we failed to satisfy our leaders; if we satisfied our leaders, we betrayed our consciences."

Dung said he had difficulty communicating the situation he saw in the field to his superiors. He was amused when an American told him that U.S. officials in Vietnam frequently make the same complaint.

Dung, 38, gave up to South Vietnamese authorities in Binhduong Province May 7 as the Vietcong made their second major effort to attack Saigon. He said that he first thought of doing so 11 years ago, "when it was clear there would be no elections to reunify Vietnam."

#### Joined Vietminh at 15

He joined the Vietminh at 15; at 16 he was a member of the Communist Party. He was a 24-year-old deputy battalion commander when the French were defeated in 1954.

Dung went to North Vietnam after the partition of the

country and became an artillery officer in the North Vietnamese army.

"I am proud of joining the Vietminh to fight against the French," he said. "But I began to find that communism was not the right doctrine for me."

But three things made it difficult for him to decide to abandon the Communists, Dung said.

He was not sure that the government in Saigon was any better than the government in Hanoi; the Americans were supporting Saigon and he thought they were responsible for blocking the national elections called for by the Geneva agreements; also, he had many friends on the Communist side.

#### Thinks Capitalism Better

Dung said he knew little of capitalism except what he learned from Communist lectures and books, but he believed that capitalism could make the people happy and the country strong.

"It was not all good, but if

communism with colonialism, communism is better; if you compare communism with capitalism, capitalism is better."

He decided that the Saigon government had many faults but was better than the government in Hanoi.

"As a Vietnamese," Dung said. "I don't like to have foreigners—especially foreign troops—in the country."

It took much thought before he decided that the Americans were not the aggressors and were not seeking a colonial empire in Vietnam, he said.

He compared the actions of the United States in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Hungary and found them identical, Dung said. If Russia was not an aggressor, neither was America, he said. He thinks no encroachments by communism on parts of the non-Communist world should be tolerated by the United States.

As to the problem of having to leave — and perhaps fight against—his friends if he rallied to the Saigon government, Dung said, "If I had waited for everything to be right, I would never have been able to rally."

SAIGON DAILY NEWS  
21 March 1968

# Escape from life in N. Viet Nam

*As told to Mekong Features reporter, Thanh Hiep, by 16 year old Nguyen Van Truong who escaped with help of a North Vietnamese resistance organization.*

SAIGON (MF) — "Each person is allowed a monthly food ration of 6 kilo of rice and 4 kilo of maize, be this sufficient or not; while the entire family gets half a cup of fish sauce, two pieces of flint and enough petroleum to last one day..."

"Every year they gave us a ticket to buy 3 meters of state-made fabric. No one could buy more."

allowance of 300 gm of meat on the occasion of the TET New Lunar Year celebration. But with the beginning of 1967 President Ho announced: «We are to give up our TET ration of meat to help our dear fellow countrymen of the South...»

This description of actual conditions in North Vietnam was given by 16 year old Nguyen Van TRUONG who li-

Nghe An Province, North Vietnam near the 17th parallel which separates North from South Vietnam. Truong managed to escape in mid-1967 with the help of a resistance movement in North Vietnam called the League of the Holy Sword.

"Each detail of our life," Truong continued, "our every activity was controlled and regulated by the States. Every one

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Ho's teachings which urged... to work without paying attention to the month of the year, to the week of the month, to the day of the week and to the hour of the day.' In my village of Quynh Luu most people earn their living by farming or fishing. Every day, at 2 o'clock in the morning, I went with the fish boats out to sea. We were not allowed to go beyond 7 or 8 kilometers from shore as the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communist) officers are afraid many of the fishermen would try to escape. At five in the afternoon, all the fishing boats had to go back to port where Party cadres awaited to value and take our fish. Each fisherman was allowed to keep one kilogram of fish regardless of the size of his family.»

«I may affirm,» TRUONG continued, «that we were all very angry with such practices but no one dared show his discontent. Even so we were a little better off than the farmers who got only their regular monthly allowance of rice and maize. However,» TRUONG added, «even the allowance of rice and maize is not granted to everyone, but only to those who get marks for their work. Those who cannot work, even for some illness or any other reason, will get reduced marks and their monthly rice allowance is cut down. For example if a worker can not work for two-days, his rice allowance for that month is lessened by 700 gr—more than 15%.

In addition to the obligatory hours to be worked for the State, the number of which was never clearly fixed, people had to work extra hours to increase their family income. Moreover, every one had to go to four or five meetings a month to hear the Communist Party cadres lecture on the policy of resistance against American imperialism, and the false government of the South,

«I do not know about the other provinces of North Viet-

nam,» TRUONG continued, «but I know that in the district of Quynh Luu no peasant owned a radio set. Only Party cadres—men holding positions of village commissar upwards own these devices ».

«Walking and riding water buffaloes and oxen are the current modes of transport, in the whole district of Quynh Luu, only Party cadres and some villagers own bicycles. Bicycle owners, who wish to sell must get permission from their village authorities and pay a heavy tax.»

«In North Vietnam the two religions, Buddhist and Catholic, are under constant pressure from the Communist Party and the Government. Catholics are the object of constant suspicion. The Party cadres tell Christians, 'Suppose you live a lazy life and sit all day long to worship the Christ, will he give you rice to eat and clothes to put on...?' They spread among the people their propaganda saying that Christians include reactionary elements always seeking to go over to the enemy. «Christians are the foes of our people,» they say. TRUONG continued, «After the arrest of Father Tran Dinh CAN, Priest of Quynh Luu parish on August 7, 1966 the cadres arrested Bishop Tran Dinh NHIEM, of the archdiocese of Vinh. Three months later Father CAN was brought back to his church

where the cadres assembled the population and read a verdict condemning Father CAN as guilty of the crimes against the people, then he was taken away and no one ever heard from again.»

Many churches and pagodas have been turned into offices and storage places for the Government. TRUONG stated that the little parish in the village of Quynh Ban has been used as a State granary since 1965.

For public entertainment one can see propaganda films and plays occasionally if he has

enough money for the ticket. Generally entertainment subjects call for increase in production, or relate the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the Chinese struggle or the Russian revolution.

## Marriages

All the young people in North Vietnam must learn by heart the following slogan, «Delay making a choice of you mate. If the choice has been made, postpone the marriage. If the marriage has been made, wait to have children. If the children are born, limit their number; one child is not enough, two children will do, three are too many.» Marriage is not allowed for men under 22 and women under 20. The engaged couple must get permission from the State and pay a tax which some times is more than they can raise.

After marriage the State permits each couple to give birth to two children. If a third child is born, the State can tolerate this «misfortune». But if the wife has any indication of a fourth pregnancy, she is obliged to have an abortion and submit to an operation which will prevent having any more children. Boys and girls convicted of illegal liaisons will be brought before popular criticism and then be «reeducated» in a detention center. If they have a child from their illegal liaison, the child is not allocated a normal monthly ration of food.

## Conscription

TRUONG reported that previously the State only recruited young men 18 years of age upwards, except for Christian youth who are judged unreliable. But within the past three years the age limit has been dropped to 14 and Christian youth are included.

TRUONG said that the cadres told everyone that the Northerners who fled South at the time of partition of the country in 1954 had been killed by the Americans. Most of TRUONG's own family was

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among the League. The location was unknown to him. Later the leader of the League agreed to help him join his family in the South. Once again he was taken in a boat for six or seven hours and then placed in a small boat and told to row to shore. When finally ashore, he was taken to the Danang Reception Center of the Open Arms program of South Vietnam.

In early December 1967 he was given a pass signed by Mr. Vo CONG chief, of the Danang Center. With this pass, TRUONG obtained the right to reside in any part of the Republic of Vietnam.

As usual young TRUONG went to his boat to go fishing but now he changed his fishing area and instead of going close to the shore, he sailed nearly 7 km off the coast. There on April 29, 1967 he met a boat from the League. TRUONG waved and shouted to them. He was taken aboard the ship and afterwards blindfolded and brought to a mountainous region which was called the

met, and that others like himself would also be helped to flee South.

«As soon as I put my feet on the ground of the South,» TRUONG continued, «my eyes were dazzled with amazement and I was dreaming.» Everything appeared new to him. At a tailor shop he stopped in wonder at the large display of clothes «May I buy some?» he asked. «Of course you may, provided you may, provided you can pay for them,» the shop owner answered with a laugh.

«People in the South,» TRUONG continued «really enjoy to much freedom and they are very happy. As compared with the Southerners' standard of living that of Northerners does not attain the thirtieth part of it. And yet the cadresmen told us the people of the South have been starving to death!»

YOMIURI, Tokyo.  
29 April 1968

## North Vietnam Has Its Troubles Too

By Edward Neilan

Hong Kong (CNS)—Referrals to North Vietnam as a supremely motivated, unified and monolithic nation, prepared to fight "20 years or more," determined to "liberate" South Vietnam at any cost, have been heard often enough.

But the statements aren't necessarily so.

There is ample evidence that North Vietnam has its arguments between hawks and doves, that the country has morale problems in the face of intensive bombing and news that seeps back about casualties.

In his writings about the last Indochina war North Vietnamese Gen Vo Nguyen Giap said, "Psychological depression sets in from time to time on the home front and even among leaders. We must strive to combat this weakness."

That Hanoi is having more trouble at home than the West might suppose is revealed in the text of a North Vietnamese document made available by

The document was referred to in a broadcast by Radio Hanoi on March 21. It is a decree on the punishment of "counterrevolutionary crimes."

This was the first time in recent years that Hanoi has suggested so openly that there were some cracks of this type appearing in North Vietnam's national fabric.

Hanoi's National Assembly Standing Committee originally passed the decree on October 30, 1967. President Ho Chi Minh signed an order promulgating it on November 10.

However, for reasons still unknown outside Hanoi's ruling circles, the decree was not made public until more than four months later, at a news conference.

It can only be supposed that the officials were arguing the possible effects of announcing the decree, and weighing negative repercussions against the urgency of putting it into effect immediately.

Authority for the decree is the Democratic Republic of

Vietnam (DRV).

The article says: "The state strictly prohibits and punishes all acts of treason, opposition to the people's democratic system, or opposition to reunification of the fatherland."

As defined in the decree, counterrevolutionary crimes are "opposition to the fatherland and the people's democratic power, sabotage of socialist transformation and construction undermining national defense and the struggle against US aggression for national salvation aimed at defending the north, liberating the south, and reunifying the country."

The rule of thumb in "Hanoi Watching," as in "China Watching," is that these regimes seldom resort to mention of such negative aspects of socialist society unless the offenses are already being committed flagrantly.

Fifteen specific crimes spelled out in the decree are presented as fitting the definition of counterrevolutionary crimes. It is assumed that most, if not all, of these crimes

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listed have already been committed to some degree:

- Treason, in collaboration with a foreign country.
- Plotting to overthrow the "people's democratic power."
- Espionage.
- Intruding into DRV territory to violate security.
- Armed rebellion.
- Banditry.
- Defecting to the enemy.
- Murder, assault and kidnapping.
- Sabotage.
- Undermining "the people's solidarity."
- Disrupting public order and security.
- Opposing state policies and laws.
- Disseminating counterrevolutionary propaganda.
- Attacking detention camps and freeing convicts.
- Harboring counterrevolutionary elements.

The crimes are broken down according to severity. There are punishment levels according to whether a person is "the main plotter, leader, principal culprit, or one who stubbornly opposes the revolution."

Both "attempted crimes" and "actual crimes" are punishable, according to the decree.

In commenting on the decree in an editorial, the official North Vietnamese newspaper Nhan Dan gave further hint that Hanoi was having trouble with some dissenters:

"The decree demonstrates the line and policy of quenching the counterrevolutionaries of our country in the present phase.

"These people are the stubborn elements in the former exploiting classes, landlords and capitalists, reactionary elements profiting by religion, former puppet officials, army elements not wanting to transform themselves.

"They are instigated by US imperialists to weaken our national defense force."

In the US, the press and other venues of debate and opinion insure that opposition voices can be heard.

In North Vietnam, which ranks with North Korea as the world's most closed society, opposition to the administration and its policies can only be gauged obliquely by carefully studying statements and decrees.

\* \* \*

The text of some of the articles of the decree refer to crimes which probably have taken place on some scale. It is unlikely that they would be mentioned only as hypothetical cases.

Punishment for banditry, for example, will be handed out "to those who for counterrevolutionary purposes engage in armed activities in mountainous or coastal areas; kill cadres, civil servants, military men, policemen, or the people, and disturb security and or-

der."

Sounds, in effect, as though the North Vietnamese have a guerilla problem of their own (quite likely spurred by some clandestine infiltrators from South Vietnam).

In the US, criticism of army officers is called dissent or exercise of free speech. In North Vietnam, it's called "disrupting the public order and security" and is punishable by imprisonment of from 5 to 15 years.

Another crime is "distorting the US role and spreading rumors that confuse the people."

In other words, if farmer Nguyen Van Loc says, "Well, the Americans aren't so bad after all," and suggests to a friend in the next rice paddy that he should think this over, farmer Nguyen is liable to imprisonment for up to 10 years.

The decree has a closing note which must be one of the world's most sweeping retroactive clauses:

"The counterrevolutionary crimes which were committed prior to this decree and which have not yet been tried will be tried in accordance with this decree."

The signature on the decree, as it was submitted to Ho Chi Minh for promulgation, was that of National Assembly Standing Committee Chairman Truong Chinh, regarded as the leader of the pro-Peking wing of Hanoi's elite.

## U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT 22 April 1968

### BOMBING TOLL IN NORTH VIETNAM

HONG KONG

More than 1.5 million tons of bombs have been dropped on North Vietnam—as much as the total dropped on Europe in all of World War II.

As the Hanoi regime prepares for talks with the United States, here are the latest intelligence reports of the damage:

The industrial state Ho Chi Minh started to build has been leveled. Not a single important factory is operating. Cement plants, thermoelectric plants, steel-fabricating plants—all are in ruins.

Only a few small factories, moved into the countryside, survive. Wasteful portable generators provide what electricity is available at many vital installations.

Every effort has been made to spare

residential areas, docks at Haiphong, and a few other facilities. But damage, over all, is staggering.

Bombing has kept 500,000 men and women busy repairing transportation routes. An additional 150,000 are tied down at antiaircraft defenses. These are people who normally would be in the fields.

Food rationing is severe. Black markets abound. In fact, the Hanoi regime grudgingly looks the other way at this free-enterprise system.

North Vietnamese are able to buy on the "free market" with impunity, as long as they have the money. Money is not plentiful, however. Families scrape together what they can to buy foodstuffs to augment the meager rations the Government permits legally.

Rice is in short supply by standards of other Asian countries. The

poorest peasant in South Vietnam is getting perhaps twice as much rice as his North Vietnamese counterpart.

North Vietnam was forced to import 500,000 tons of rice last year. The Government-fixed price is more than double the price in Saigon. On the "free market" the price of white rice is often 8 to 10 times as high as in Government-controlled stores. The cost of basic commodities in North Vietnam has increased at least 300 per cent since early 1965, when bombing started.

The Government has warned of a possible poor rice crop this summer because of bad weather. It has complained of the breakdown in planting of secondary crops, warned of cattle disease, and protested the slaughtering of too many pigs.

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AGRICULTURE: A CONSPICUOUS WEAKNESS OF COMMUNISM

1. Agriculture has been labelled the "Achilles heel" of Communism. Communist agriculture has bitterly disappointed the reasonable expectations of people in Communist-run countries. The total amount and quality of agricultural products are lower than the land and farmers could produce under less restrictive conditions. The prices are higher than they would be if economic forces determined the rates of production and means of distribution. Thus, Communist agriculture fails to yield a fair return for the work of either the farmer or the consumer.

2. Assets addressing mass audiences may emphasize the historical pattern of unreliability of Soviet farm production, the brutal treatment of farmers during collectivization, and the subsequent neglect of farmers and of the development of farming, as well as the current limited and less than whole-hearted efforts to correct the accumulated deficiencies of Soviet agriculture.

3. Addressing intellectuals, assets may draw on both the scholarly conclusions of the Britisher Dr. Klatt and the acid criticisms of Czech writer Jan Prochazka concerning the ideological shortcomings of Marxist agriculture (see unclassified attachments). Emphasis can be given to the shallowness of Soviet attempts to uphold Marx' and Lenin's formulations on agriculture.

4. Continued attention to the shortcomings of Communist agriculture is especially important in developing areas whose populations are predominantly agrarian. Governments and intellectuals in these countries may be dazzled by the (true and alleged) advances of Soviet, Chicom and other Communist industry, military technology, etc. Our assets should keep reminding them that their first problem is to provide adequate food for their rapidly increasing populations and that no Communist country can effectively assist them in fulfilling this most fundamental and truly vital task.

SECRET